DEMOCRATIC
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GERMAN WRITERS WARN OF NEW WORLD WAR THREAT

Leading writers of the German Democratic Republic, including internationally famous figures such as Arnold Zweig, Anna Seghers and Ludwig Renn, issued a statement at the beginning of December warning that recent world developments had brought closer the danger of new war.

The statement, reproduced in full on this page, was drawn up by the Central Management Committee of the German Writers' Union. Other signatories, in addition to those named above, included Louis Fuernberg, Stephan Hermlin, Wieland Herzfelde, Stefan Heym, Jan Petersen and Bodo Uhse.

The events of this year, and particularly those of the past few weeks, have moved and stirred us as they have moved and stirred all thinking and feeling people who want socialism. This emotion was expressed particularly in the declarations and open letters issued by writers in various countries. There were many differences and shades of opinion and of temperament in these declarations, but in most cases there was a common factor: the honest search for the right way to overcome serious mistakes made in the past, and to find more effective methods to fight for socialism, methods in accordance with national peculiarities.

The latest events have shown us all that the relaxation of tension between East and West, which had just begin to develop, is in dreadful danger, and that thus the possibility of a new world war has come nearer.

We oppose vehemently everything which could endanger the peaceful co-existence of the peoples and international cultural exchange.

We declare:

1. Those responsible for the attack on Egypt and on the constitutional foundations of the Hungarian People's Republic are responsible for the menacing change in the international atmosphere.

In the very face of the ruins of Port Said and Budapest, various newspapers and foreign radio stations in Germany launched an unprecedented lynching campaign and pogrom propaganda. Those responsible will have to answer for their deeds at the proper time.

2. We writers, citizens of the German Democratic Republic, who cooperate in the work of improving our country, take a stand against those who, by threats of civil war and by attacks, attempt to unleash the cold war once again and thus endanger further democratisation.

3. The fronts remain the same.

We are convinced that all intellectuals who favour relaxation of international tension and co-existence, whatever differences of opinion exist in their assessment of the latest events, will come together again in the near future in opposition to the supporters of a cold war policy. We feel ourselves linked by bonds of friendship with all writers in the German Federal Republic whose work serves peace, and with our writer colleagues in the Soviet Union, France, China, India, Poland, Hungary and all other countries.

4. At a time like this, when the international trusts would like to dictate to the workers the methods they should use to build Socialism, and when notorious book-burners preach to writers on artistic liberty, we close our ranks, at the same time taking courageous steps to overcome our defects, and continuing our discussions. For the sake of Germany, for the sake of peace, the workers' and peasants' power remains the foundation on which we take our stand.

WORKERS' COMMITTEES FOR EAST GERMAN FACTORIES

SEE NEXT PAGE

WORKERS' COMMITTEES MOOTED FOR EAST GERMAN FACTORIES

Big Discussion Starts: What Rights Will Committees Have? – Will They Overlap Trade Unions? – Can They Act Effectively?

Workers' committees elected by the factory workers themselves should help run their factories, the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party proposed on November 20th.

Such committees could help to increase initiative and a sense of responsibility in the factories, and to strengthen the ties between the working class and the state economic organisation, the Socialist Unity Party announcement stated.

The official announcement stressed that the hard and fast form which such workers' committees could take would only be determined after a broad discussion of the proposal at all levels, particularly in the workshops. Even the name to be given to the new committees was left open: "These committees could be called workers' committees, or something similar" the announcement said.

Main Outlines

The main outlines of the tentative proposals made by the Socialist Unity Party were as follows:

1. The committee should be directly elected by all workers employed in the socialist factory. At least two-thirds of the members should be workers from the shop, and the remainder technical personnel and office employees. The list of candidates, which could be drawn up by active trade unionists, should offer a real choice by including more candidates than there were positions to be filled.

2. The workers' committees should have the right to demand an accounting from the works director on all factory questions, and should have the right of decision within the field of factory competence. In case of a difference of opinion between the works director and the committee, then the case must be decided by the minister responsible for that branch of industry.

3. The rights of the committee could include the following points:

a) Discussion of the individual sections of the factory production plan.

b) The improvement of technique, the introduction of new working methods, the improvement of work organisation.

c) Cooperation in long-term planning for the factory.

d) The distribution of premiums for good work.

e) Important personnel questions.

If the works director believes that decisions of the workers' committee constitute a breach of the law, or of ministerial instructions, then a decision in the case must be given by the relevant minister.

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The proposals made by the Socialist Unity Party, tentative as they were, gave rise to wide-spread discussion in the factories, and considerable changes may be expected in the plan before any legislation is introduced. In the following columns we present some of the first contributions to this discussion in the factories and in the press.

Not Yet Satisfied

The "Berliner Zeitung", leading East Berlin newspaper, stated: "The workers already have considerable influence on the factories which they own: indirectly through the state, and directly in the factory through their trade union organisations, through production conferences, and so on. This is already more, much more, than the workers of West Germany can even dream of.

"But we are not satisfied with what we have already achieved in our march towards socialism. The rights which the workers already possess are not used to the full. Many workers are not clear about the rights they have, and how they may be used.

"Now the time has come to take a further step. The Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party has proposed that workers' committees should be formed in the socialist factories, committees which will be fully reponsible for many important factory questions.

"And what are these questions? They include everything connected with the running of the factory: the rational use of the factory funds, the confirmation of the factory plan, the distribution of premiums, or a possible division of profits. The workers' committees should also concern themselves with the organisation of the work in the factories, and important questions of personnel.

"The proposal is a far-reaching one. These workers' committees are not expected simply to discuss important questions and state their opinion: they should have full power of decision within the framework of the competence of the factory concerned.

"Even a superficial glance at the proposed tasks of the new workers' committees shows that they touch at many points the tasks of the trade unions. At this stage of the discussion it is too early to say where the borderline will be drawn between the areas of competence of these two organs of the workers.

"The discussion has been opened. We realise fully that our enemies will try to get their word in in this discussion. They will try to make demands on the workers' committees which would interfere with the process of democratisation. But this should not prevent us from having an open and courageous discussion on the subject."

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Production Agency

Walter Haferkorn, chairman of the trade union committee in the nationalised Leipzig Tin-plate Works stated:

"The workers' committees should concern themselves primarily with problems of production, and the trade unions should concentrate on social and ideological tasks. Such a division of labour would not mean a reduction in the authority of the trade unions, but would make the real tasks of the unions clearer."

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Werner Schmidt, leader of a workers' brigade in the Schmoeckwitz Tyre Works, Berlin, stated:

"One of the tasks of the new committees should be to supervise the putting into effect of improvement suggestions made by the workers. The committee should also supervise the way in which quarterly premiums are awarded to officials in the industrial economy. The committees should be elected by all workers in the factory, and not only those organised in the trade unions."

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Three Objections

Felix Eliaschewitz, secretary of the factory group of the Socialist Unity Party in the Treptow Electrical Apparatus Works, Berlin, stated:

"In connection with the new proposal various opinions are being expressed which we shall have to oppose. These include objections from economic officials, who fear that their 'powers' will be infringed upon; the idea expressed by trade union officials that there will be nothing left for them to do; and reactionary ideas that it may be possible to use the workers' committees as a means to oppose our workers' and peasants' state and to disorganise the economy.

"My thoughts on these problems are: firstly we must see to it from the beginning that the workers' committee does not lay down the law to leading functionaries on every minor point, thus making things even more bureaucratic; but on the other hand important decisions must no longer be taken without the cooperation of a larger collective group.

"With regard to the second problem, trade union officials will still have plenty to do even after the formation of workers' committees; for instance to show all workers the basic importance of socialist construction, to organise emulation contests, the holiday service, production conferences, and Christmas parties for the children. I do not think it would be right for the workers' committees to be responsible for such daily questions as the fixing of wage categories or the distribution of premiums.

"On the third point we must not allow the speculations of our enemies to be successful. The workers' committees must be composed solely of people who stand four-square on the principles of our nationally-owned factories and of the German Democratic Republic."

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Guenter Prillwitz, smelter in the East Foundry Combine, Stalinstadt, stated:

"I am particularly in favour of the proposal that the workers' committees should have the right to demand an accounting from the leading officials in the works. In the past such accountings have been given from time to time in party meetings and trade union meetings, but it is particularly important that such statements should be made at times when there are difficulties in the works which can be overcome with the help of the workers."

Trade unions too Weak?

Guenter Funk, worker in the Eltros factory, stated:

"These workers' committees will finally be a body that can put its foot down. The trade unions have hitherto shown themselves to be too weak in production questions. At the same time they have neglected their original task, that of protecting the interests of the workers. The workers' committee should see that the right of co-determination of the workers is not disregarded, as has happened in the past."

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H. Beyer, head of the planning department, Merseburg Paper Factory, stated:

"The creation of workers' committees has received some support in our factory. Some discussions proceed from the standpoint that if the factory trade union group did its job properly, then it could master these problems too. Some of the workers believe that the proposal will just mean the formation of another commission, which will slowly become a sleeping partner if it is not in the right hands. I myself wonder how the socialist prinziple of individual leadership will be maintained."

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F. Beschnidt, section foreman in Coswig Gear Factory stated:

"The workers in the shops, including the foremen, mainly support the view that the workers' committees should be an instrument which can give good support to the work of the factory, particularly work organisation, the drawing up of plans, etc. For this these committees will have to be equipped with special rights.

"On the other hand in the factory administration people are holding back with their opinions, since no exact directives have yet been received. There is some support for the opinion that there is no need to create a new body, which would only lead to a loss of working time. Instead the factory trade union committee should be given more powers."

SHOULD WE CHANGE THINGS?

By Stefan Heym

Stefan Heym, noted author of "The Crusaders" and many other books, writes a regular column for the East Berlin newspaper "Berliner Zeitung". Here are some extracts from his column printed in that newspaper on November 25th:

Every worker of any experience knows that you can get into a bad position in the class struggle if you let the enemy call the tune. Today, on the other side (in West Germany, ed.) they are blowing extra hard on the propaganda trumpets at the moment. Despite all the noise it is our job to weigh up coolly what is to be done to further the cause of the working class, and together with it the cause of democracy, German unity and peace.

Naturally we have on our side people of good will, but with little courage, who say: For God's sake let us keep quiet. Don't let us stir up anything or change anything until things have settled down again... But I suspect that these are the same people who mark time when things are quiet too.

You can also play into the enemy's hands by doing nothing. Isn't there a lot of pressure from the other side precisely so that we should become timid? It is precisely the class enemy who desires that we should not change those things which must be changed, nor improve those things which must be improved.

I think it is a good sign that the question of increasing workers' influence in their factories should have been brought up just at this time. This means that we are taking a step forwards, that we are controlling the speed and the direction of developments.

There is room for discussion as to whether we need special bodies — workers' committees — in the factories, or whether we ought not rather to try to give the big new tasks to the trade unions, and thus try to drive out of their heads the idea, that is all too generally accepted, that they are just a sort of glorified holiday booking agency.

The main thing, however, is that every single worker should see from daily experience that his factory is his own factory, and not just some sort of concern run by some anonymous agency.

A worker who regards his factory as his own, and who has a hand in deciding on the results of his work, will not only work with a much better will, but will also be prepared to defend his factory to the last ditch...

What is true for the worker and his factory must also be true for the citizen with regard to his state. This brings me to another serious question: Have we done everything possible to wipe out the century-old feeling that the state is some far-removed, untouchable and often even frightening power? It will not help us much to proclaim over and over again that our state is a workers' and peasants' state, unless our citizens have the feeling, day in and day out, that they have their rights in this state which no-one can shake.

These rights include the right to work, to recreation, to education in accordance with their abilities, to aid in sickness and need — in fact all those rights which have never been guaranteed by a capitalist state.

But another of these rights is that of protection against arbitrary acts on the part of the administration. I believe that we have thought too idealistically here for far too long. We have thought that our administrative officials could do no wrong, simply because they are officials of a workers' and peasants' state.

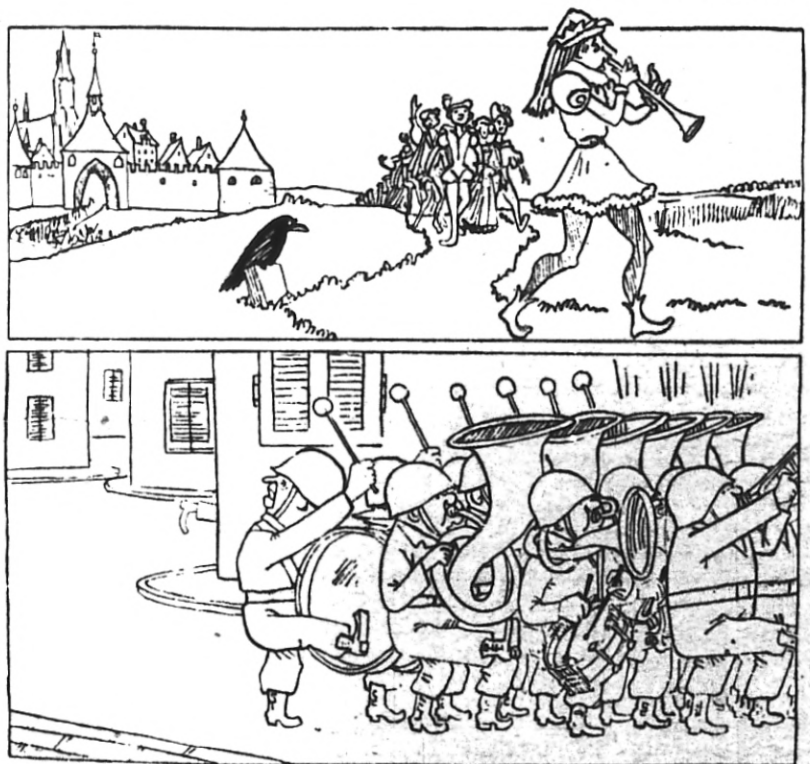
A worker is a decent fellow, we thought, and he will go on being a decent fellow even if he goes to work in the administration.

But he can make mistakes, and even more so because he, as a former worker, has a difficult time. Has it not happened often enough that a decent worker changed for the worse when he got well set in a comfortable office chair?

And this has resulted in injustice, faulty decisions, the mechanical application of instructions, arbitrary actions both small and large, irritation and bitterness.

PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

(from "Wochenpost", East Berlin)



In 1284 in Hamelin one man piped and many followed.
In 1956 in Hamelin many men piped and none followed.

(In Hamelin, West Germany, not a single young conscript has yet registered for the new Wehrmacht, despite all appeals.)

SOCIAL DEMOCRAT ON HUNGARY

"Keep Cool Heads" Says W. German Labour Leader

Herbert Wehner, member of the Central Board of the West German Social Democratic Party, addressed Hamburg officials of his party on the world situation at the end of November. He dealt at great length with recent events in Hungary, and called upon members of his party to keep clear heads on events both there and in other parts of the world.

GERMAN REPORT believes that readers in all parts of the world will be interested in this assessment of the situation, and therefore reprints extensive excerpts from his speech on these pages.

"We Social Democrats, who have striven and will always strive for the maintenance of peace so long as the Social Democratic Party and ideas of a new social order exist, have a special duty to help in the search for ways to overcome the present crisis by political means.

"We Social Democrats, and democratic socialists in other countries, are especially shocked by these terrible events, although we can today do nothing but mourn the fate of the victims. We are shocked because the pure ideal of Socialism has been sullied with blood in Eastern Europe, and we are shocked by the actions of the most prominent western powers.

"But we must now hold our feelings in check and, in face of the many attempts to spread nothing but panic as a result of these terrible happenings, we must use our influence to see to it that measures are taken which will make it absolutely clear to those exercising power in the United Nations Organisation that the people of all countries — including those of divided Germany — are on the side of peace and freedom.

"We Social Democrats have a special task, and we should be clear that we cannot sit in self-righteous judgment over others. We must be firm in our attitude to those who are trying to exploit events in order to set the nations at each other's throats.

"This is being done in Germany in a particularly subtle and underhanded way. The Social Democratic Party and all democratic socialists have a great deal to learn from this crisis. We have much to learn from events in eastern Europe on the one hand, and also from the fact that a Socialist Party heads the French Government which has gone to war against Egypt".

Herbert Wehner quoted at length from a report given by Anna Kethly, Hungarian Social Democratic leader, to a meeting of the Socialist International in Vienna at the beginning of November this year. Her report was extremely important for an understanding of the events in Hungary, Wehner said.

Anna Kethly told the Socialist International that following the 20th Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union there had been big discussions in Hungary, first amongst the writers and students and then amongst the workers. Demands were made for reforms on the lines which had been originally formulated by Imre Nagy when he became Prime Minister for the first time in 1953 — a slowing down of collectivisation on the land, a brake on heavy industrial construction, and measures to improve the supply of consumer goods.

When these demands were not met there were big demonstrations in Budapest on October 23rd, which culminated in shots being fired by the security police, Anna Kethly said. After this the students and the workers armed themselves, and the revolt spread.

Anna Kethly had emphasised that she was not an anti-communist or enemy of the Soviet Union, and that she realised that Hungary had to remain on friendly terms with the Soviet Union, which was her neighbour. She added however that it was impossible to estimate fully the damage done to Hungary by the communists, with Soviet help.

By the beginning of November, Anna Kethly said, she realised that the popular movement was in danger of falling under the influence of other forces. Hatred against the security police and against communist functionaries had developed into a sort of fever of destruction against everybody believed to be members or officials of the Communist Party. Not only they, but also their wives and children were being persecuted and killed in indescribably brutal ways.

These events could only be compared to the dreadful events in 1919 when the Hungarian Socialist Republic was overthrown (The Hungarian Republic of 1919 was governed by a coalition government of Social Democrats and Communists. Many thousands of socialists were murdered when the Republic was overthrown by Rumanian, British and French troops, ed.).

Anna Kethly stated that Cardinal Mindszenty, who was set free during these events, had become the standard bearer of these white guard (fascist, ed.) elements. He had found nothing better to do than to call for a return of land to the landowners, and the restoration of the property of the Catholic Church.

On October 31st, Anna Kethly stated, a delegation of Budapest students had gone to the Cardinal and called on him to stop his subversive tactics. The Social Democrats had warned the peasants that a restoration such as the Cardinal was calling for would mean that their fields would be taken away and restored to the landowners.

Concluding his summary of what Anna Kethly had told the meeting of the Socialist International, Herbert Wehner continued:

"Some people may say that this is all old history now, but I believe that it is very important for an understanding of the events which followed, and the second Russian intervention.

"In these days Janos Kadar left Prime Minister Nagy, and attempted to form a new Socialist Workers' Party, which could get things under control again.

"People often call this government formed by Kadar simply a Quisling-government. Of course people standing on the fringe of events generally think they know best, but this has nothing to do with actual events.

"When Anna Kethly reported to the United Nations in New York she asked for help for Hungary; but she declared at once that she wanted no military help, for enough blood had flowed in Hungary. Even on this journey to New York Anna Kethly still said she could not believe that Kadar was simply a traitor. He had himself been imprisoned for years under Rakosi and had suffered terrible torture.

"It is not possible to tell today whether a development such as has taken place in Poland can be achieved in Hungary, so that at least some of the reforms desired by the people can be carried out.

"It is difficult to find firm ground again after the events in Hungary, and attempts to do so will not be made easier by seizing this opportunity to carry on a totally one-sided propaganda in the same tone as those who have always told us that the Russians can do nothing but shoot.

"This sort of propaganda helps neither the other peoples of Eastern

Europe, the Russians nor ourselves. We have to try by political means to overcrome this crisis. For it is a crisis which spreads not only over all the eastern bloc countries, but also, as events in the Near East have shown, over the western system as well.

"To deal with the east first: On October 30th the Russians issued an important statement on the necessity of altering their relationship with countries within their sphere of influence. They emphasised that this relationship rested on the basis of the complete equality of these countries and peoples, of observance of territorial integrity, national sovereignty and non-intervention in each others' internal affairs. The Russians admitted that these principles had been seriously encroached upon in the past and emphasised that the continuation of such encroachments was condemned by the resolutions of their own 20th Party Congress.

"Thus they wish to make all possible efforts to set up a new order in these relationships, and have also clearly stated that they are prepared to withdraw their troops from various countries in Eastern Europe if the governments of those countries wish this and if it be done with the agreement of the members of the Warsaw Pact. Economic and other advisers are also to be withdrawn. This was an announcement which met with the approval of those who had concerned themselves with events in Eastern Europe.

"But this was on October 30th. A few days later a new wave of military intervention began. And today it is a question whether the declaration of October 30th is to be regarded as annulled by this intervention, or whether the Soviet Union should be taken at its word.

"There are many today — and especially in our superclever West Germany — who say that this declaration of the Russians has been shot to death. But it is our job to hold this road open, and not to block it by declaring that there can never, under any circumstances, be another chance of negotiating with the Soviet Union.

For how can a way be found out of this crisis except by political means? Must there be shooting? It is now clear that the loudmouthed radio promises of help to Hungary, parachute troops and so on, sent out from West Germany, but not only from here, were absolutely worthless.

And of course for the American President, who had his hand on the helm, it was from the start clear that a military answer would mean a third World War, and he cannot start that. There is thus a limit to movements of revolt in these countries.

"It is absolutely right that we should do everything possible to show the Soviet Union and its representatives how seriously we condemn the military intervention and how much we are in favour of genuine national self-determination. But we must realise that we shall achieve the very opposite of what we desire if we let ourselves be governed by a wish to see the Soviet Union humbled.

Our seriousness in the Hungarian question will be measured by our seriousness in the Egyptian question.

"People have got used to treating those things which they condemn in the one camp as only minor defects in the other camp, things which they cannot exactly approve, but which they would not dream of taking so seriously. There have been signs in Germany, especially in Christian Democratic Party papers, that these events are being used to whitewash the 'greatest Fuehrer of all times' — or at any rate his surviving underlings. But just because this crisis affects us so deeply, we must stand up sincerely for non-intervention and for the right of self-determination for all peoples, whatever the colour of their skins or their type of government. Only in this way can we help to overcome the crisis."

On internal policy, Wehner spoke of the need for a new orientation which could really contribute to international understanding instead of appearing always as crusader and "the decisive force". He quoted West German War Minister Strauss as saying that if the Soviet Union went on acting as before, this would mean that the Soviet Union would be wiped from the map of Europe. He condemned this as stupid; Germany needed a government which would also make its contribution to international understanding. The German people must remember that they were a central European people living in the midst of Europe, itself divided and also sharing the geographical fate of the countries on its frontiers.

"We must try to build bridges, to form links, instead of stirring up bad blood and presenting ourselves as the most obstinate and conservative exponents of cold war tactics."

He called for a clear definition of what was necessary to preserve Europe, and its application to the whole of the continent, for real economic cooperation in Europe.

He demanded an end to the cold war between the two parts of Germany, stating: "It cannot be in our interest if want and chaos reigns in divided Germany. We cannot countenance or acquiesce in a policy which aims at producing such chaos. Neither can we help irresponsible organisations in this part of Germany to carry out their irresponsible activities in the other part.

As a political party we have repeatedly taken steps calculated to relieve tension between the two parts of Germany. These cannot yet lead direct to reunification, but they help to provide a more favourable atmosphere.

"Step-by-step approach will be the order of the day, and this will be more important than allowing, or even encouragng, a situation in which there will be nothing left to do except to cut each other's throats. I must emphasise this, since many people today are full of speculation as to what could happen in the Soviet Zone (the German Democratic Republic, ed.). But people who cannot keep control over themselves and who can only think in terms of hanging, throat-cutting and denunciations are the very ones who are helping to perpetuate the division of Germany."

Wehner's final point was that an end should be made of what he called the "idle game of sovereignty of the two parts of Germany". Instead of the incorporation of the two parts of Germany in power blocks, the task was to create a system of security for the whole of Europe.

"We Social Democrats" he said, "must do more than simply lament over events ... We must recognise that the military pact system is in a crisis. Ground has been broken which can open up the way to other forms of peaceful co-existence of states and peoples, regardless of their internal regimes, which will point the way to recognition of certain over-all principles."

RIGHT-WING PAPER THREATENS WEHNER

The right-wing newspaper "Rheinischer Merkur" called on the West German authorities to take legal proceedings against Social Democratic leader Herbert Wehner because of articles he has written in the Social Democratic official organ "Vorwaerts".

The "Rheinischer Merkur" which is regarded as the personal organ of West German Chancellor Adenauer, stated on November 22nd: "Wehner is guilty of treachery to the West German Constitution, because he misuses freedom of speech and freedom of the press to defend the 'People's Democracies' against free democracy. This is punishable under Article 18 of the constitution ... The next step lies with the Federal Minister of the Interior."

MR LUCE DISCOVERS E. GERMANY

TIME Mixes Fact & Fiction

US Newsmagazine Time, published by newsmagnate Henry Luce, has at long last discovered East German industry. In its November 19th issue Time magazine presented its readers with the following survey, skillfully mixing fact and fiction.

Readership of Time and GERMAN REPORT overlaps but little: we therefore reprint the Luce report, with sundry footnotes helping readers through the Luce jungle:

Last week East German production had increased to such a level that the government announced it will cut the work week from 48 hours to 45, which might also help to pacify any rebellious workers.

East Germany gets few benefits from its recovery. Its best products are for export only, some 80 % of its trade is with the Soviet bloc. (1) Russia alone takes 47 % of her exports of machinery, electrical equipment and optical instruments, reportedly at cut-rate prices set by the Soviets.

East Germans say their steel production is up to 2 million tons, brown coal up to 200 million tons, electricity up to 29 billion kw-hours for 1955, all double the 1936 output and way ahead of the wartime peak of 1943. Western authorities tend to accept these statistics, admit that the industrious Germans have made remarkable progress since 1950 by putting everyone to work and using women in backbreaking men's jobs. (2)

One of the better export industries that have risen from the ruins is the mammoth Carl Zeiss optical works at Jena. Forty per cent bombed out during the war and dismantled by the Russians, it was rebuilt by the Germans, now makes cameras, binoculars and scientific instruments on a par with the West's.

Machines approaching western standards, and below Western prices are coming from the more efficient nationalised factories, among them Magdeburg's Ernst Thaelmann Heavy Machine Werks, which the East Germans pieced together with infinite patience from scavenged old machinery and parts imported and smuggled from the West. In electronics, former subsidiaries of large West German corporations, notably Siemens and AEG, have caught up by copying West German products. Some even improve on Western designs.

Not all the humming new factories do so well. East Germany's Communist Party Chief Walter Ulbricht complains that 70 % of East Germany's machine and machine-tool output is not up to world standards, and productivity is low. East Germany's own statistics admit that workers spend 30 % of their 48-hour week away from the job, attending party functions or "spontaneous" rallies where Communist functionaries often petition for extra shifts at no extra pay. (3) Furthermore, almost 7 % of East Germany's manhours trickle away in sick call (3 % in West Germany), largely because workers prefer to get sickness compensation rather than wait out plant slowdowns and receive the lower scale of layoff pay. (4)

East Germany's breakneck industrialisation has brought other bureaucratic bumblings. This is notably true in the infant shipbuilding industry, which operated in the red until 1955 because parts often were promised for delivery after the planned completion of the ship, and supplying industries were built up far from ports.

East Germany has launched one 10,000-ton freighter in Warnemuende, now is producing other freighters in Wismar and Rostock, plus 500-ton fishing luggers and luxury yachts (for Communist brass and export) in shipyards at Stralsund and Wolgast on the blue Baltic. (5)

But East Germany's marine diesel engines are of pre-war design, far too heavy and bulky to compete with the West's. Radio equipment is antiquated, automatic welding in its infancy, the use of plastics just beginning.

For all the progress, East Germany is the only satellite where food is still rationed. By most economic standards, East Germany is being far out-distanced by West Germany. At the end of its first five-year plan in 1955, the Soviet zone (pop. 18 million) fell short of its quota for new housing by completing only 215,000 new dwellings, while West Germany (pop. 50 million) was finishing more than 2 million.

In roughly the same period, real wages went up 50 % in the East, 100% in the Bonn Republic. (6) Last week West Germany released a telling statistic. In the impoverished East, autos are still restricted to a sprinkling of doctors, technicians, specially privileged artists and the Communist elite; in West Germany one person in 25 now owns an auto.

FOOTNOTES

(1) Interesting new Time theory that exports do not benefit country making them. How do other countries pay for imports? East Germany has repeatedly expressed willingness to expand trade with western countries, has been hampered by such Time-supported measures as US Battle Act, non-recognition etc. Time errs on statistics: in 1955 only 73 % of East German trade was with "Soviet bloc".

(2) Does Time prefer unemployment?

(3) Intensive search in official East German statistics fails to reveal any such figure.

(4) Many workers in West Germany must go to work, although sick, because of inadequate sick-pay.

(5) Survey here failed to reveal any "Communist brass" owning luxury yachts. Has Mr. Luce a yacht?

(6) Time has a different book of statistics. Official East German figures show real wages rose there 125 % between 1950 and 1955. Gross wages in West Germany rose nearly 100 % in same period, but were accompanied by steadily rising prices.

BRITISH OPERA PREMIERED IN DEMOCRATIC GERMANY

"The Men of Blackmoore", new opera by British composer Alan Bush, had its world premiere in Weimar, East Germany, in November.

The opera tells the story of some young 19th century North of England miners and their sweethearts against the background of a miners' strike.

Critics who saw the first performance in Weimar praised the epic nature of the story, written by Alan Bush's wife Nancy, and the astringent quality of Bush's music.

BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

With Christmas just round the corner, I suppose I should utter my annual warning: beware of the stories which always seem to come from West Berlin just round about this time that Christmas has been banned in Democratic Germany.

The stories vary a little in detail, but every December some journalist in West Berlin sits down and writes a story claiming that Father Christmas has been abolished, or Christmas trees have been blacklisted, or carols forbidden.

I can only repeat, as I have done for the past four Decembers, that these stories are pure inventions. The Germans have an international reputation for thoroughness, and this applies to Christmas in both East and West Germany. There is what I can only describe as a "total Christmas" atmosphere all over the place from the beginning of December, and as I tune from station to station of the radio network of the German Democratic Republic trying to get away from the sound of infant voices piping carols I must admit that it is sometimes too total for my taste.

Visitor from France

Having done this annual chore, let us pass on to see what a visitor from France is struck by when he visits Berlin. The visitor, M. Francois le Gallois, made some interesting comments in an article published in the East Berlin weekly "Sonntag".

"I believe the Berliners are suffering from a peculiar complaint" le Gallois writes. "They cannot see the wood for the trees. They seldom compare the situation today with that of a year ago; they tend to compare what they have today with what they think they should have."

He emphasised that he did not get exclusively favourable impressions of Berlin, that there were certainly many things which were not as they should be. But that a number of things had developed surprisingly well during the last year.

"The thing which I noticed most particularly was the freedom of discussion which has become such an accepted thing in the German Democratic Republic that the Berliners take it for granted. People are again talking openly about everything and there are no more 'taboos' such as still existed last year."

Le Gallois noted a number of small things which struck him about Berlin.

"I went into the HO (state trading organisation) textile shop on the corner of Unter den Linden and Friedrichstrasse and bought myself a pure silk tie for about 11 marks, which is probably quite a lot of money for a Berlin worker. But two days later I saw a very similar tie in a shop on the Kurfuerstendamm in West Berlin, which also cost 11 marks — but 11 marks West, and I am pretty sure that a West Berlin worker would find it much harder to produce the 11 West marks than the East Berliner the 11 East marks.

Cheap Typewriter

"I also bought a typewriter, which cost 396 East marks, and I must say I am very pleased with it. A few days previously a lawyer friend of mine in West Berlin had bought himself a typewriter of a similar kind for 445 West marks

"I could make similar comparisons with other things, like cameras, opera glasses, handkerchiefs and so on... and even with subway fares; I found to my astonishment that you can ride from Alexander Platz (in East Berlin) to Wilmersdorf for 20 pfennigs, but from Wilmersdorf (in West Berlin) to Alexander Platz you have to pay 30 pfennigs West.

"There are certainly a number of things which are still more expensive in East than in West Berlin, but these differences are gradually disappearing, and even a letter to my wife posted in West Berlin cost 40 pfennigs and in East Berlin only 25 pfennigs!"

Le Gallois remarked that not only were prices much lower, but he had also seen a much greater variety of better quality articles in the shops. He was astonished at the large number of attractive women's dresses in the HO shops, and pleased to see that the hideous old-fashioned furniture appears to be disappearing.

"Of course there are still some things" he adds, "like that terrible picture shop in the Friedrichstrasse, where you can still see noble stags against a purple sunset such as one saw before 1933 — things like this should really disappear soon."

Speaking of the position of students and artists in the German Democratic Republic, le Gallois writes:

"I know that students in the Humboldt University in Berlin have many criticisms of the German Democratic Republic — whether rightly or wrongly I am not in a position to judge. But it might be a good thing if the government sent a couple of dozen students to study in Paris for a term, to let them see what intellectual and material worries French students have.

Le Gallois also relates some instances of official bureaucracy — in connection with entry slips into government offices, for instance: "There are still offices which do not require entry slips, others where citizens of the German Democratic Republic but not foreigners must have entry slips, still others where citizens must show their identity cards at the door and foreigners not, and even offices where citizens and foreigners from Socialist countries have to show identity cards, but not foreigners from western countries.

"I noticed many other things" he says: "the politeness of the People's Police, the large number of bookshops full of customers in East Berlin and the fewer, empty bookshops in West Berlin; the delightful zoological gardens in Friedrichsfelde in East Berlin; the crowds in the HO shops; the much better quality of television programmes compared with those in West Germany, and above all the vitality and forcefulness of the East Berliner, which you can feel everywhere, especially in the constant critical discussion."

I must add a note of dissent to the last paragraph: East German television is certainly getting better all the time, but I feel that both technically and in programme planning and presentation it still lags behind West German TV. But this is a subject to which I hope to return in a future number.

Panglossism

Several readers have pointed out a silly blunder in my last Notebook. The character in Voltaire's "Candide" who went round saying "All is for the best in the best of all possible worlds" was called Dr Pangloss. Panurge, to whom I attributed the saying, is a character created by Rabelais. I hang my head in shame.

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